

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 DOTE-00 CG-00 EPA-04 IO-14
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R 131943Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS STATE 009968

FOR SCIATT

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SENV, UNEP, US, MEX

SUBJECT:UNEP INTEREST IN FACILITATING US/MEXICAN ENVIRON-
MENTAL COOPERATION

REFS: (A) STATE 192240, (B) MEXICO 15154, (C) STATE 214395,
(D) MEXICO 21524, (E) MEXICO 15947

1. VICENTE SANCHEZ, UNEP REGIONAL REP FOR LATIN AMERICA
BASED MEXICO CITY, HAS ADVISED DEPARTMENT (KING - OES/ENP/
EN) OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SR. JORGE VELASCO, DESCRIBED
AS DEPUTY SECRETARY MOFA, IN WHICH LATTER SAID HE WOULD
WELCOME UNEP'S ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP AN EARLY MEETING
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BETWEEN US AND MEXICAN OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS COOPERATION IN
TWO SUBJECT AREAS: DESERTIFICATION/ARID LANDS AND MARINE
POLLUTION.

2. BECAUSE IT UNCLEAR WHETHER VELASCO AWARE OF ONGOING
US/MEXICAN EXCHANGES IN THESE TWO AREAS, REQUEST SCIATT
DISCUSS MATTER WITH HIM DIRECTLY, USING BACKGROUND INFO

PROVIDED BELOW, TO SEE SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE HAS IN MIND AND WHAT ROLE HE SEES FOR UNEP.

3. DESERTIFICATION: (A) VELASCO'S INTEREST THIS SUBJECT MAY HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY AND RELATED TO PREVIOUS US/MEXICAN

DISCUSSIONS, FIRST IN TUCSON LAST JULY (REF A) AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION IN NAIROBI LAST SEPTEMBER. ON BOTH OCCASIONS MEXICAN OFFICIALS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SECOND BILATERAL MEETING, AFTER THE DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE AND BEFORE SERIES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD LATER THIS YEAR. PURPOSE WOULD BE TO PREPARE FOR REGIONAL MEETINGS AND TO CONSIDER SPECIFICS OF POSSIBLE US AND MEXICO DESERTIFICATION PROGRAM BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE. REF (B) ALSO INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF A POSSIBLE JOINT US/MEXICAN WORKING GROUP TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION. UNQUOTE

(B) DEPARTMENT WANTS TO ASSURE THAT SESSION PROPOSED BY VELASCO IS DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF EARLIER WORK AND WILL INVOLVE SOME OF THE SAME PRINCIPALS ON MEXICAN SIDE.

ALFREDO RAMIREZ ARAIZA (CONACYT) HEADED MEXICAN DELEGATION AT TUCSON MEETING; AND ENRIQUE GALVAN, COMISION NACIONAL DE ZONAS ARIDAS WAS ONE OF EARLY ORGANIZERS AND ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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MEMBER OF MEXICAN DELEGATION TO UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE. AT SAME TIME WE HOPE MEXICAN PARTICIPATION FUTURE MEETING WILL GO BEYOND QUOTE SCIENCE COMMUNITY UNQUOTE FOCUS IN TUCSON TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVE FROM RESOURCE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT MINISTRIES. IF SIGNIFICANT NEW PROGRAM IS TO EMERGE, IT WILL REQUIRE ENDORSEMENT AND SUPPORT OF HIGH LEVELS IN BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

(C) FYI: USG REVIEW OF DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE IDENTIFIED POSSIBLE NEW US-MEXICO COOPERATIVE PROGRAM AS ONE OF MOST PROMISING RESPONSES US COULD MAKE TO CONFERENCE. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP, CO-CHAIRLED BY STATE AND DEPT. OF INTERIOR, BEING ESTABLISHED TO EXPLORE PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING BUDGET IMPLICATIONS. END FYI.

DEPT. PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO SCHEDULE 2-3 DAY MEETING ON DESERTIFICATION FOR MEXICO CITY IN FIRST PART OF MARCH. ESTIMATE 4-5 OFFICIALS ON EACH SIDE WILL BE MINIMUM REQUIRED TO ADDRESS SUBJECT SATISFACTORILY. REQUEST SCIATT VIEW OF DEPTH AND SCOPE MEXICAN INTEREST IN DESERTIFICATION SUBJECT, AND ANY INFORMATION ON

SPECIFIC PROGRAM IDEAS/PROPOSALS THAT MEXICANS MAY RAISE.

3. MARINE POLLUTION: A) CONCERN OVER GROWING ALASKAN OIL TANKER TRAFFIC OFF US/MEXICAN WEST COAST AND INCREASED OIL EXPLORATION OFF BOTH COASTS RESULTED IN DISCUSSION OF JOINT OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLANNING DURING AUGUST 11-12, 1977, MEXICO CITY MEETING OF SOCIAL

WORKING GROUP. AT THAT MEETING, GOM AGREED TO EXCHANGE NAMES OF OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY CONTACTS (NOW DONE-- REFS (C) AND (D) AND TO REVIEW A DRAFT CONTINGENCY PLAN TO BE PREPARED BY US. (DEPARTMENT EXPECTS TO FORWARD DRAFT PREPARED BY US COAST GUARD IN NEAR FUTURE.)

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(B) POLLUTION OF GULF OF MEXICO RAISED BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE MARTINEZ-MANATOU IN SEPTEMBER 14 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR LUCEY (REF (E). FYI. US CURRENTLY REVIEWING DATA AVAILABLE TO USG AGENCIES ON POLLUTION LOADINGS TO THE GULF. AS RESULT THIS REVIEW,

WE EXPECT TO BE IN BETTER POSITION FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSIONS OF ISSUE WITH GOM. END FYI.

4. WE HAVE PROMISED SANCHEZ AN EARLY RESPONSE, BUT WILL NOT PURSUE MATTER FURTHER UNTIL WE HAVE SCIATT'S REPORT ON APPROACH TO VELASCO. WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER VELASCO SPEAKS FOR GOM IN THESE MATTERS AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO PLAY A CONTINUING ROLE.

5. FYI - DEPT. PREFERENCE IS FOR ACTIVITIES IN TWO AREAS TO REMAIN BILATERAL FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE, AND TO AVOID USE OF UNEP AS INTERMEDIARY OR ENGAGE AS THIRD PARTNER UNLESS THERE IS STRONG SUPPORT FOR MAJOR UNEP INVOLVEMENT ON MEXICAN SIDE OR OTHER PRESENTLY UNPERCEIVED CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE EMBASSY VIEWS THIS ASPECT. END FYI. CHRISTOPHER

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